

# The Architectural Review.

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## ✓ The Use and Abuse of Precedent.

To what extent in architectural design is it well to adhere closely to precedent? How far is precedent valuable or necessary, and in what degree is there danger of blind adherence to it proving a hindrance to progress? These are questions which under present conditions it is well to ask, which must often arise in the mind of the earnest and conscientious architect, and which it is important to have answered rightly.

The subject has been treated in a general way, and with direct reference to the various "historic styles," as we have come to call them, in Mr. Van Brunt's excellent series of papers on "The Historic Styles and Modern Architecture," which has recently appeared in these pages. But it may, perhaps, be well to consider the matter in its practical bearings with the aid of some examination of actual examples of recent architecture.

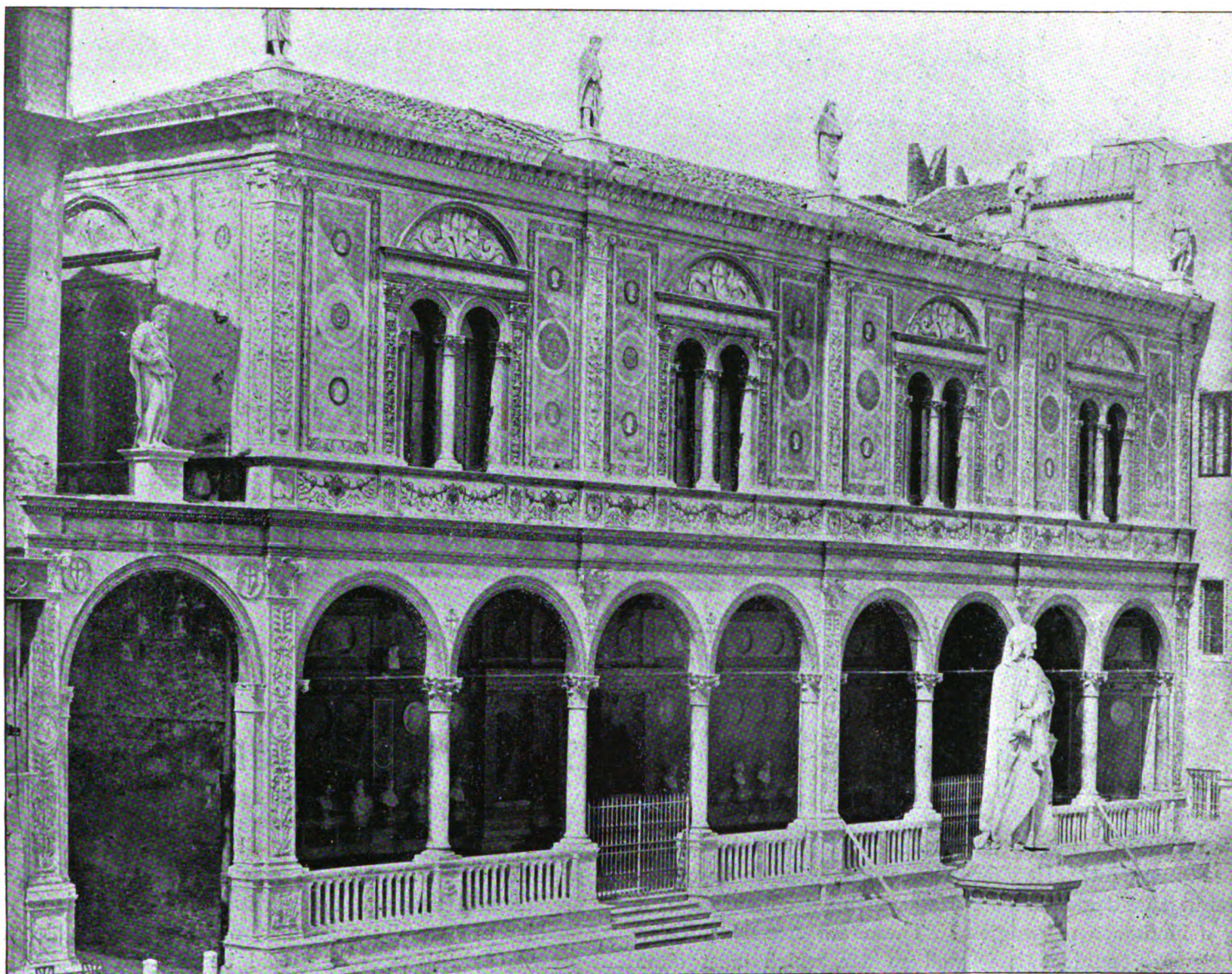
In the first place it will be well to premise that the question is one which could not have been raised except in modern times. Hardly, until the present century, was there ever any doubt as to the architectural language which the builder at any given time and place should use to express his thoughts. That he used simply and naturally the style of his own time and country in erecting a building, was as much a matter of course as that he used his mother tongue in speech; and just as the languages gradually and unconsciously developed from each other, so gradually and unconsciously, through the modifications brought about by actual needs and circumstances, and the imperceptible changes of ideals, grew the architectural styles. The first conscious looking to precedent came with the Renaissance, and it is to Renaissance thought, and life, and work, that we owe the essential characteristics of modern conditions. It was the Renaissance which created the profession of architecture and gradually brought about the separation of the architect and the craftsman by consciously turning toward precedent, and so requiring in the architect the training and theory of the scholar in place of (to some extent in addition to) the practical knowledge and manual skill of the builder. It was the Renaissance which produced that self-consciousness which is one of the most marked characteristics of the modern mind, a self-consciousness from which we cannot escape, and

which must necessarily affect all our endeavor. This, coupled with the fact that there is now no style which is our natural architectural language, that all European styles are to us equally familiar and equally unfamiliar, makes it impossible that under present conditions there should be any unconscious growth in architecture except to a very limited degree. So much by way of emphasizing the importance of the present inquiry, How far shall we follow precedent? How far, disregarding it, is it possible or desirable for us to strike out a new path, and from the direct and simple satisfaction of practical wants to evolve, however gradually, a new mode of architectural expression?

To take the second question first, If precedent were to be entirely disregarded, what would be the result? We should have, on the one hand, constructions absolutely utilitarian, devoid of ornament, devoid of style, bald, bare, and uninteresting. We often find such buildings, works strictly speaking of engineering rather than architecture. They are characteristic of our age, for it is doubtful if at any other period of the world's history men have been able to do any building without infusing some artistic feeling, however unconsciously, into their work. From such buildings as these it is obvious that no artistic advance can spring, for the true art of architecture is not a thing that can be applied to a structure, like trimming to a dress, but it must grow with the structure itself, is inseparable from it, and modifies its every part, not only in ornament but in construction, so that even an absolutely plain building may be instinct with art. Only those buildings in which the art inheres in the very structure itself, and is, as it were, the expression of its very life and purpose, are really architecture. We may, then, for the purposes of the present discussion, dismiss these frankly and merely utilitarian buildings from consideration.

On the other hand, if precedent is disregarded and there is an attempt at ornamentation, an attempt at artistic expression, what is the result? No great architectural style has ever come into being except as an evolution from some previously existing manner of building. All great buildings and, until the present century and country, all builders everywhere, since the time of





PALAZZO DEL CONSIGLIO, VERONA, ITALY.



NEW YORK HERALD BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.



the first rude huts, have worked with a conscious or unconscious reference to precedent, modifying it more or less gradually as their needs or ideals dictated. We have no reason to suppose that good architecture can ever be produced in any other way. It is contrary to experience, and it is contrary to reason. A beautiful language is as likely to be created *de novo*, complete and perfect, by a single individual or group of individuals, as is a beautiful style of building. The result is, inevitably, a sort of architectural Volapük, a grotesque and ghoulish gibberish, which might conceivably be forced to serve certain utilitarian ends, but which could as little produce a building which should touch the souls and imaginations of men, as the "language" invented by the ingenious German scholar could be expected to produce a great poem, simply because they both lack those elements of growth and spirituality from which all beautiful things spring. But the buildings that have resulted from disregard or ignorance of precedent are worse than any productions of Volapük, for they are, for the most part, inorganic, incoherent. Members and ornaments, employed without any regard for or apparent knowledge of their meaning, use, or origin, result in a miserable, ungrammatical, ridiculous hodgepodge, all the more distressing when we recognize suggestions of familiar members taken from different styles, and made ugly by being distorted and misapplied. For even here the impossibility of getting away from precedent is apparent. For the self-styled "originality" and "novelty" and "oddity" (what a condition of the public mind in matters of art is revealed by the use of the word "odd" as a term of praise!) consists mainly in the distortion and incoherent juxtaposition of members from well-known and widely different styles without reason and without feeling. Such architectural nightmares we see in many of the new fronts to the old buildings on Boylston Street, Boston. The original part of the Adams House, in the same city, or the Potter Building in Park Place, New York, such are the "aberrations" which the *Architectural Record* has been publishing and ridiculing. But nothing will be gained by dwelling on these failures. They are but too well known. We have no cities in the streets of which they are not frequent.

It must be evident, then, that it is impossible to work without reference to precedent, and that the attempt is disastrous and necessarily so. The time, as we have seen, has gone by, when precedent could be naturally and unconsciously followed, when artistic growth was spontaneous, almost involuntary. There is no style in which we naturally work to which we naturally turn as a starting point. Whether such desirable conditions will ever obtain again, we cannot tell. Our business now is with the conditions as we find them, and we find ourselves obliged to choose the style in which we shall work, to look consciously to precedent, to understand and analyze our every step lest we fail. With regard to precedent, then, the only question for us is, not whether we shall use it, but how best to make use of it. It is obvious, in the first place, that, to make the best use of it, we must thoroughly understand it. We must know thoroughly the history of the growth of all the styles of which we make any use, or to which we look for inspiration; we must understand and appreciate the origin and purpose of every member, the feeling and ideal which inspired the use of every ornament, in order that we, in turn, may use or modify them rightly and intelligently. As architects we have no concern with archæology as such, but we are much concerned, in present conditions, with the results of archæology. We should not be studious to have our buildings archæologically correct in every detail, but it should be our care that no feature, no detail, should be used except appropriately as an expression of purpose, of use, and as an integral and necessary part of an artistic whole. This will demand a scholarly and thorough training in the knowledge of the great historic styles, which have sprung up in the course

of the development of our civilization, and all therewith involved. By this is not meant that good architecture can be deduced by a process of reasoning based on scholarly knowledge, however extensive. There can be no art without the artist. All art must result from artistic feeling, artistic impulse; but it must be an instructed feeling, and an impulse restrained and chastened by knowledge.

Having now our thorough knowledge of precedent, what use are we to make of it? To follow blindly where it leads, to do nothing unless we find some example we can exactly follow? This obviously would be to preclude all possibility of growth, and without growth there can be no real art, for a real, a living art is ever changing. This would make precedent the master instead of the servant, and would result in mere imitation, in the death of art. Such a view produces the attitude of mind which regards everything that has been done in the great periods as necessarily right, and finds a ready answer to all criticism by saying, "Such a detail is to be found at Salisbury," or "Exactly such a feature was used by Bramante."

But let us rather see what use was made of precedent in the great times of art. Let us learn from the spirit, not the letter of those times! We find that precedent was always used as a point of departure, a source from which to bring new developments, not a standard to be exactly followed. The following of precedent, as we have seen, is a necessity, but it is no more a necessity now than it always has been. The only difference is that now we must choose what precedent we will follow, and that our artistic endeavor is necessarily more self-conscious than of yore. In all fruitful periods of art the new developments have sprung from the satisfaction of some practical or spiritual need, and have, therefore, their source in use, and so it must be now and always. While it is true that there can be no good work without the following of precedent, it is also more vitally true that precedent is harmful if it is allowed to interfere with the fullest satisfaction and expression of practical wants. Our following of precedent then must be subordinate to the principle that the best architecture must fully meet every practical necessity, and must be the noble artistic expression of its use and its conditions. In such architecture there will be no member but has its purpose, its service to perform, and that will not by its form express that purpose, that service, in the best and most beautiful way. Such perfect art can only come when architecture is in fact, as in name, the chief of the artistic crafts (and every craft should be artistic), when the architect is the master craftsman, and comes into that close and intimate contact with the artisan which only such a condition can bring. But to follow this consideration would lead us too far from our present purpose.

To make more clear the application of the principles above laid down with regard to the use of precedent, let us briefly examine a few of the more prominent buildings that have been recently erected.

We have already said enough with regard to those buildings that by their hideousness and ignorant incoherence show the necessity for an intelligent regard for precedent. We will only repeat that there is perhaps nothing which, for the sake of our architectural progress, needs to be so frequently and so insistently urged as the necessity for a thorough and scholarly knowledge of the growth and development of the great styles. The worst abortions, the most frequent faults, of our architecture are to be traced to the lack of this knowledge and this training. The public sadly needs to be educated to an appreciation of the real value of this knowledge and training, for there are not wanting architects who possess it, would the public only employ them. As public taste is educated, it is to be expected that the ignoramuses and charlatans will get less and less work, and well-trained architects

of some artistic power more and more. In this very necessary education of the public it can hardly be doubted that those buildings which closely follow the best precedents of the best times are performing a great use, although their authors can base no great claim to powers of original design on the buildings to which we refer. So far as these buildings are concerned, their reputed authors are little more than clever plagiarists, and can lay no more valid claim to authorship than a theatre manager who takes a play of Shakespeare's or of Sheridan's and alters it to suit modern taste

ings which are a constant education and a constant standard to the taste of Europe; but in other respects such a building cannot advance architecture. It seems out of place in the atmosphere of New York. It is entirely out of harmony with its surroundings, which, indeed, injure its effect, and it is felt at once not to be an outgrowth of the needs it is intended to satisfy. It is an exotic, and cannot appeal to the public as a building would which was felt to be an outgrowth and expression of public wants. For this reason it must largely fail in the educating influence which it



BUILDING OF THE AMERICAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY, NEW YORK CITY.

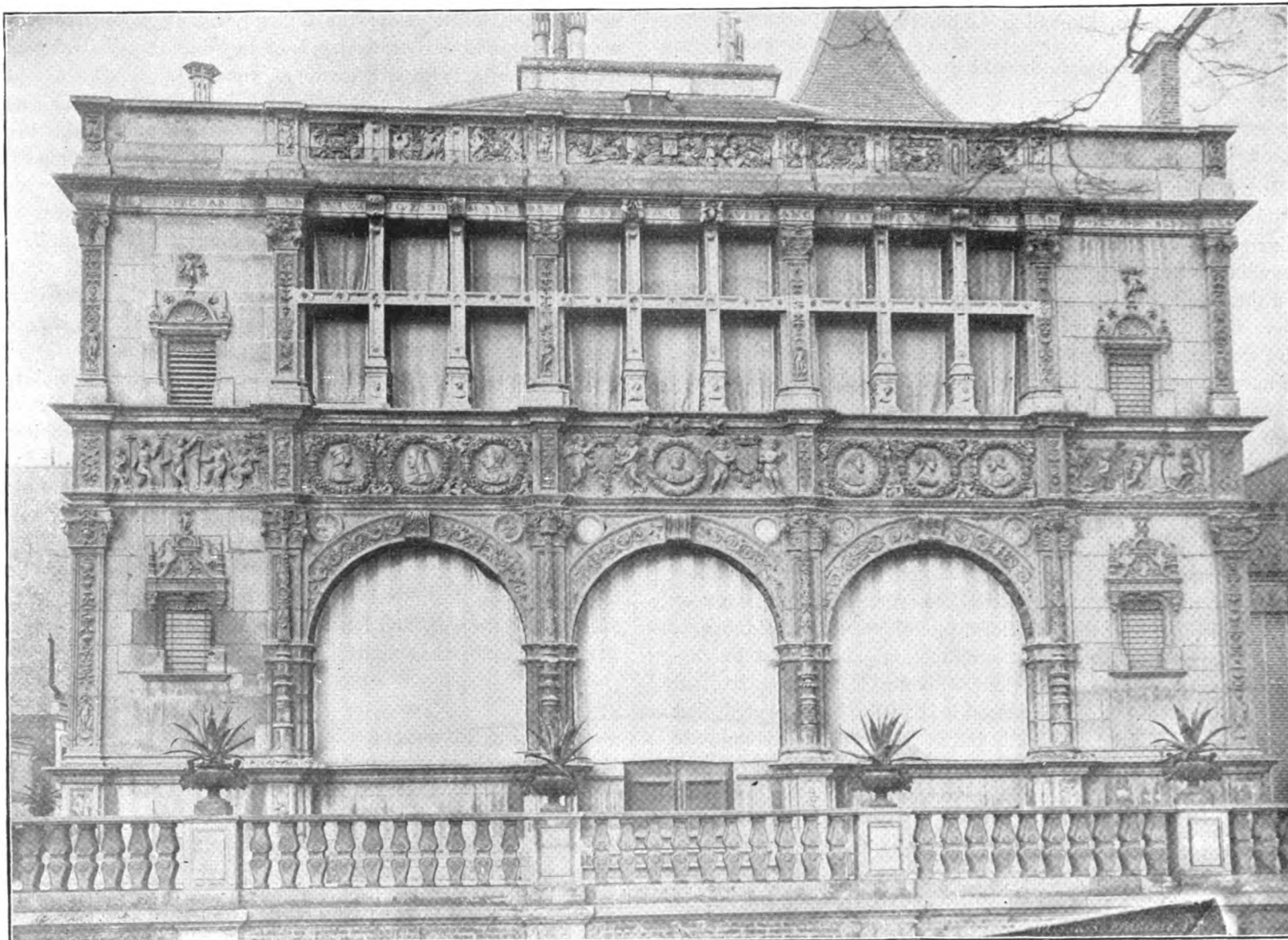
or the exigencies of the modern stage. Take, for instance, the building now being erected for the New York Herald. It is simply a copy of Fra Giacondo's beautiful loggia at Verona elongated (and its beauty of proportion thus injured), with the corners emphasized by a modification of the central motive. The few slight changes that have been made in detail are injuries to the original design. Such a structure may be of some value in placing before the public a thing of real beauty, as a standard of taste, in a country which suffers from lack of the fine old build-

ings might have. It is most essential that the public should take an interest in architecture, and should be educated to do so, and architecture needs for its own welfare such an intelligent public interest. It cannot really flourish with no appreciation, but that of an esoteric and dilettante clique. It needs for its best welfare to draw its life from the people, and, therefore, must, in the first place, appeal to them in the best way.

Or take another example of blind following of precedent hardly less marked, and even further removed from any real

expression of the purposes of the building to which it has been adapted, the recently finished Fine Arts Society's Building in New York. The principal part of the design, including the whole of the two main stories which give the building its interest and character, is an almost exact copy of a little hunting lodge of Francis I., formerly at St. Germain, but now set up at Paris on the Cour La Reine. This has been altered in proportion by increasing the relative size of the small side windows and decreasing the central openings, but otherwise has been followed down to each separate detail, with only unimportant and, as a rule, hurtful variation. Thus modified it has been raised upon a plain basement, and by the addition of a broad frieze and cornice above an attempt has been made to adapt it to its new conditions. It makes a charming building, which we are glad to see in the dreary

of its own beauty when out of harmony with its surroundings, just as a beautiful combination of color may be utterly ruined in effect by juxtaposition with other and discordant shades. The environment and situation of a building ought to be considered as important elements in the problem of design. As the various conditions of use and environment may be said to be never twice alike, it may be set down as a general rule that the wholesale borrowing of the design of any building or of any dominant feature is, if not always a mistake, at any rate always dangerous. If the original we admire is entirely appropriate to the situation and use for which it was designed, it cannot be entirely appropriate for any new purpose or different situations. The copying of individual features of a building is of sufficiently doubtful expediency, and to be done successfully must be guided by the most sensitive



HUNTING LODGE OF FRANCIS I., PARIS.

streets of New York, in spite of its ill-advised plagiarism. As a royal hunting lodge set on a broad balustraded terrace, backed by green trees, the scene of the gayety and festivity of court life, it was appropriate and charming. As the home of three societies of artists, a temple of art in a closely built New York street, it is out of place, inappropriate, and inexpressive. It was amusing to note, as indicative of the tendency to plagiarism that is just now rampant, that in the preliminary competition for this building there were two other designs copied with somewhat less success from the same original.

Appropriateness to situation and to use is an important element of beauty which is too often neglected, and which, properly observed, would prevent such plagiarism as we have referred to. However beautiful an object may be in itself, it loses much even

appreciation of functional expression and of æsthetic appropriateness and harmony, but it is a safe rule to say that the copying of the main motive of any building entire is always to be avoided.

Precedent should be studied not with a view to copying. However judiciously this may be done, it is the work of a dilettante, not of the trained designer. Precedent should be studied with a view to gaining familiarity with the best use of architectural language, just as a writer studies the best examples of literature with a view to perfecting his style. But what would be said of the literary man who made judicious selections from the classics, making such slight changes as might suit his fancy, and put them forward as his own work? Could literature advance by such means?

H. LANGFORD WARREN.

(To be continued.)



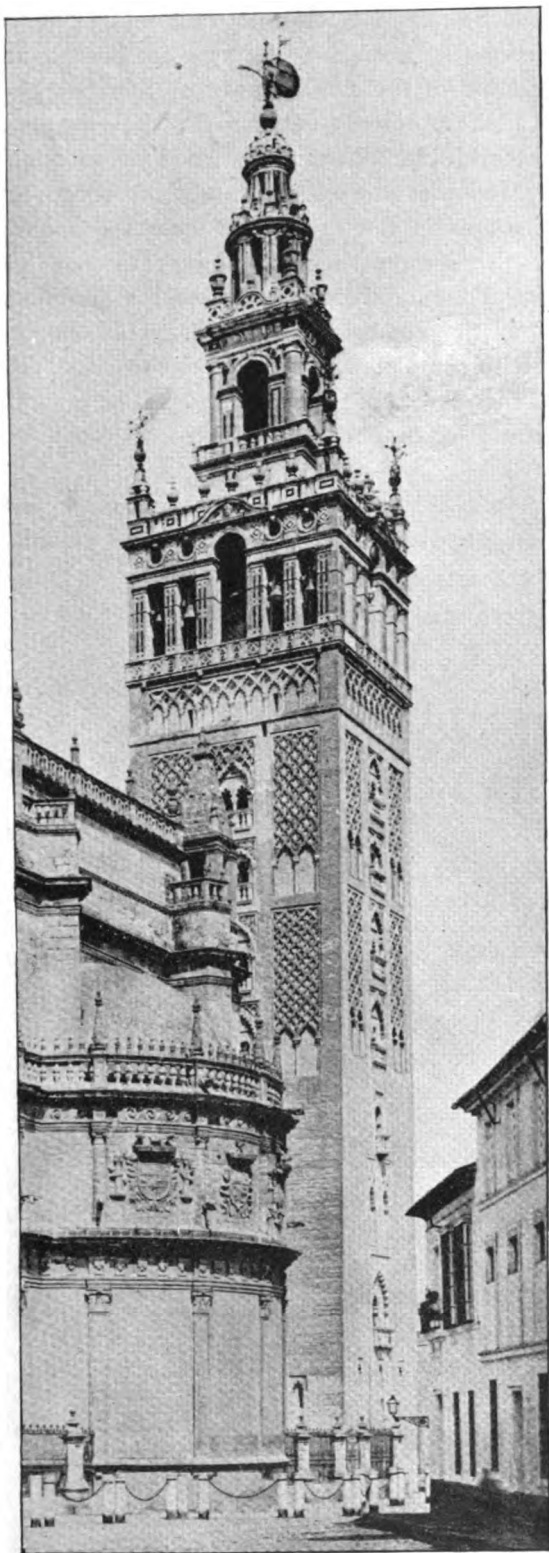
# The Architectural Review.

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April 3, 1893.

## The Use and Abuse of Precedent.

### SECOND ARTICLE.

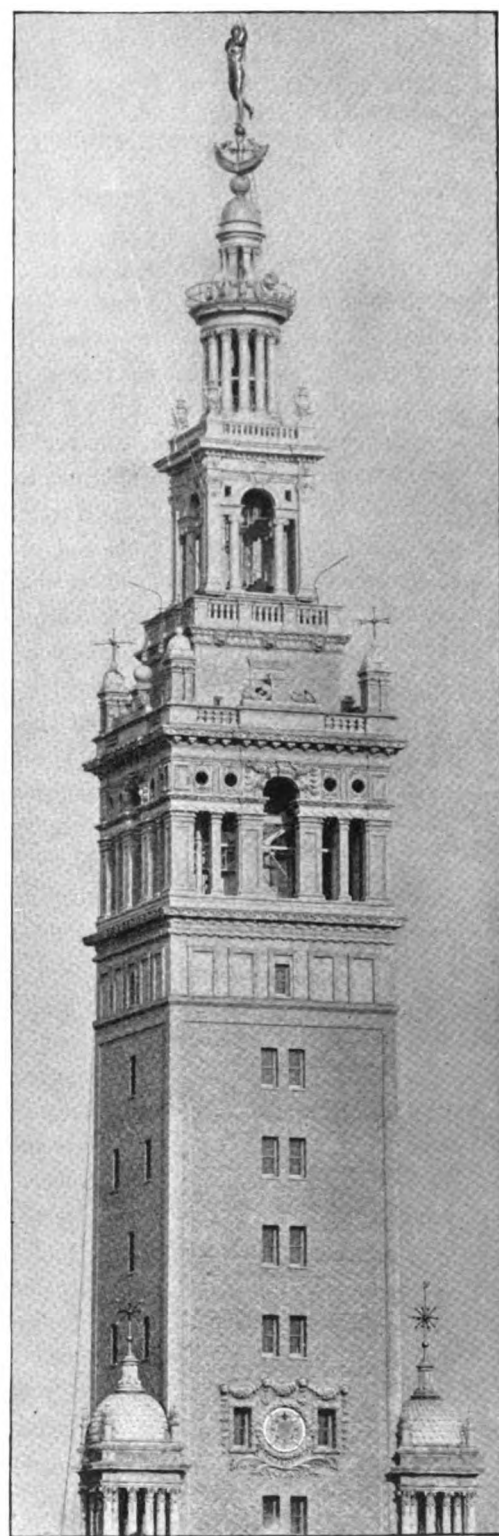


GIRALDA TOWER, SEVILLE.

In a previous article, in considering the use that has been made of precedent, examples were cited in which a whole design or its main motive has been borrowed with but unimportant modifications, and in buildings intended to meet wants very different from those of the original structures, the form being thus made to do duty its original designer never dreamt of. In so far as the uses of the modern building and its prototype differ, and in so far as the original designer was successful in producing a design that was fitting and expressive, it is obvious that the borrowed form must be to that extent inappropriate and inexpressive in its new place. Its use is, therefore, to be regretted as inducing false standards of taste, however ready one may be to admit that it is better to borrow a good design than originate a bad one. If the case were one in which the new building was identical with its prototype, or nearly so, in use and position, the borrowing might be justifiable, might be the best thing that could be done. But as a matter of fact, such cases rarely, if ever, occur. Except possibly, with some of the simpler buildings, conditions never precisely repeat themselves.

The case is somewhat different with regard to the separate features of buildings. The more or less close copying of such single features, if judiciously done, may be justifiable, since their purpose is apt to be constant. Nor is it an entirely easy thing thus to use a single feature from a much-admired building and make it harmonize perfectly with its new surroundings. To do it successfully requires a thorough knowledge of the style, complete familiarity with its conditions, and a sensitive feeling for harmony. Without these qualifications on the part of the designer, the borrowed feature is sure to look like a patch. In such a case complete success is the sufficient and only justification, and it will generally be found that, where complete success has been attained, the borrowed feature has been subject to some modification more or less marked.

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MADISON SQUARE GARDEN TOWER.



JUDSON MEMORIAL CHURCH, NEW YORK.

Towers furnish a good instance of the class of architectural objects to which we refer. A tower presumably serves always some one of two or three well-defined purposes. If a tower is needed, it is not difficult to find noble precedents which can be closely followed, and be appropriate to the case in hand. It is easy to point to examples of towers and spires that have been thus copied. One noteworthy example which will probably immediately occur to every Boston architect is the beautiful spire-crowned tower of the Arlington Street Church, which is an almost exact copy of the tower of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in London. The variations are very slight, and are such as to give to the Boston spire even more grace than its model possesses. In more recent architecture a prominent example, that will at once occur to every one, is the tower of Madison Square Garden in New York,



S. LORENZO IN LUCINA.

which follows closely the design of the Giralda at Seville. But while stage for stage, feature for feature, the Seville tower is closely followed, the architects of the New York tower have contrived to give a lightness and grace to their design, an expression different from that of the Giralda, which has more of sturdy grandeur. This difference of expression, which is largely a matter of proportion (the New York tower has more *élan*), harmonizes the tower precisely with the festive character of the building to which it is attached. In detail, the New York architects have, of course, given their tower a unity of design which the Giralda, with its two styles (its Moorish shaft and Renaissance belfry and crown), necessarily lacks, and the detail of the upper stages is generally more refined as well as richer in the modern tower. It

must be said, however, that as a whole the New York tower is no improvement on its Sevillian prototype, which has nobler proportions and more perfect harmony of parts. The former is less successful also in its junction of shaft and belfry, which is too strongly marked, although the architect of the upper part of the Giralda had the added difficulty to contend with of harmonizing two widely differing styles. The Madison Square Garden itself is a splendid example of the best use of precedent. The language has been thoroughly mastered and is used with the utmost ease and freedom, as well as with grace and beauty. Except in the smaller features—which would correspond, perhaps, to the words or phrases of language—there has been nothing like direct copying, and yet precedent guides in every part. Without a thorough knowledge of precedent, the thing could not have been done; in other words, the precedent is used as a basis for development, and with most charming results.

An example which will serve to emphasize the importance of regarding similarity of use where a precedent is to be closely followed may be found in another tower, that of the Judson Memorial on Washington Square, New York. This follows very closely the design of the tower of San Lorenzo in Lucina at Rome, with some suggestion of the similar tower of San Giorgio in Velabro. But both these towers depend for their beauty largely on the plain shaft with blank arcades crowned by an open story. In the Judson Memorial one of the conditions seems to have been a series of rooms in the tower one over the other. The open windows of these rooms seriously injure the design adopted for the tower, and should have suggested a different treatment springing from the conditions in hand. The church itself follows precedent with complete and scholarly knowledge, yet with more freedom and therefore more successfully. It is, in fact, a development from the Roman churches which suggested its design.

All the best design indeed is a development from some previous suggestion, for all good architecture has been a growth.

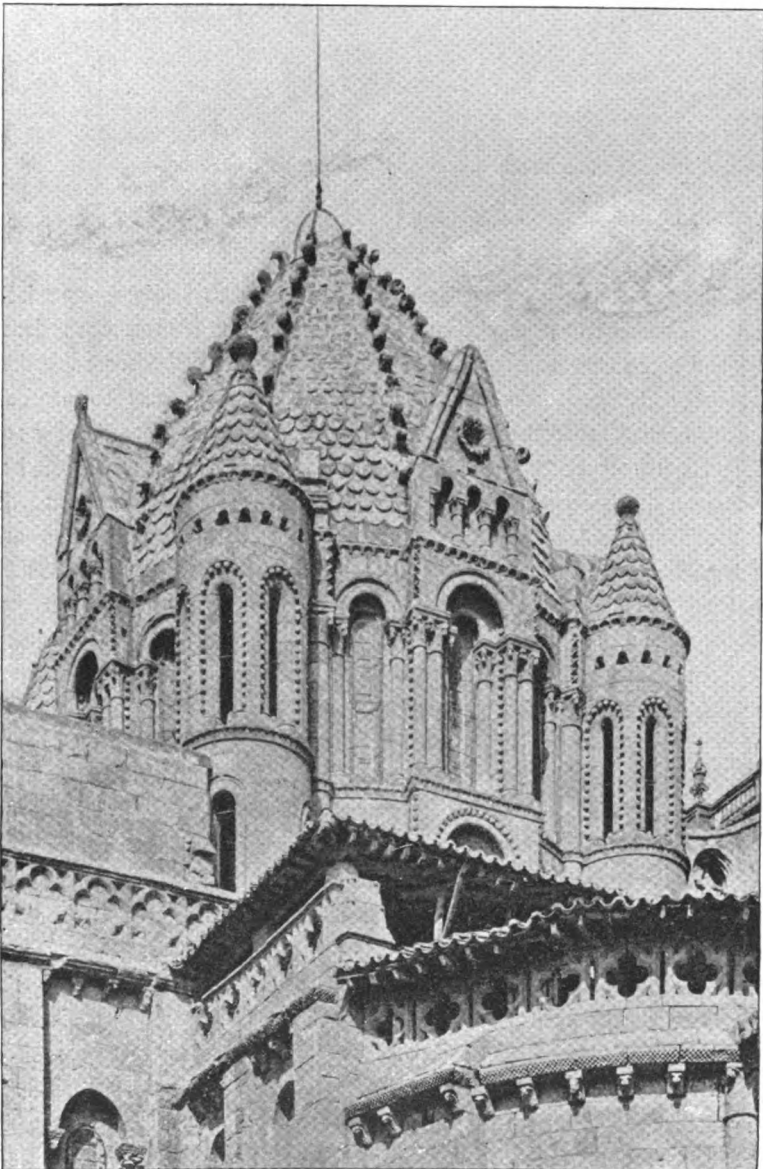


SAN GIORGIO IN VELABRO, ROME.

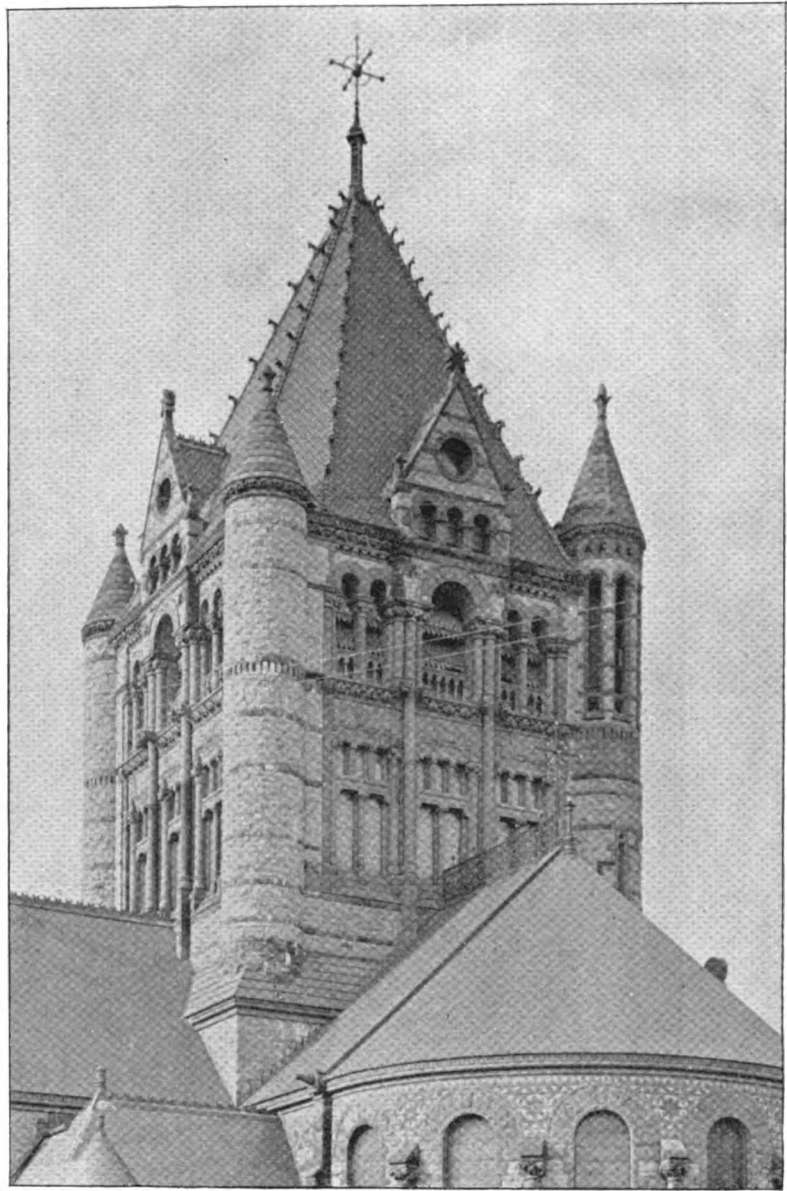


So we have designs which, while not following with anything like literalness the precedent on which they are founded, yet use some one precedent as a point of departure, and endeavor to improve upon it. The most perfect buildings of the world—such as the Greek temples—have been produced in this way. The dividing line between this class of buildings and those which hover on the border-land of plagiarism is not easy to trace; neither, perhaps, is it important. For we do not quarrel so much with plagiarism itself, as with its results. If the result is entirely satisfactory, if it makes for progress, let that be its justification. If it is incongruous, out of place, suggests its borrowing in its very face, then let us condemn it. A beautiful thing we are always glad to see, no matter whence it comes. It will be a public educator, it will have an influence for good on the public taste. Rather than originate a poor thing it is certainly better, as has been said, to copy a good one. But in that case let the architect frankly confess himself a copyist, and let it be remembered that one most important element of beauty is its fitness for the place. A beautiful thing out of place ceases to be beautiful.

In the façade of the new Boston Public Library, which is modelled on the *Librairie Ste. Geneviève* at Paris, we have an example of such development as has been referred to. At first sight it seems to follow its model pretty closely. But here the immediate precedent is of another modern building devoted to the same purpose, and the motive of its prototype is not blindly followed, but is developed and improved, resulting in one of the most beautiful façades of the New World. We have here indeed some approach to that growth, which constantly went on in the days when the precedent of contemporary work was followed as a matter of course. We are here speaking only of the main front of the library,



TOWER OF THE OLD CATHEDRAL, SALAMANCA.



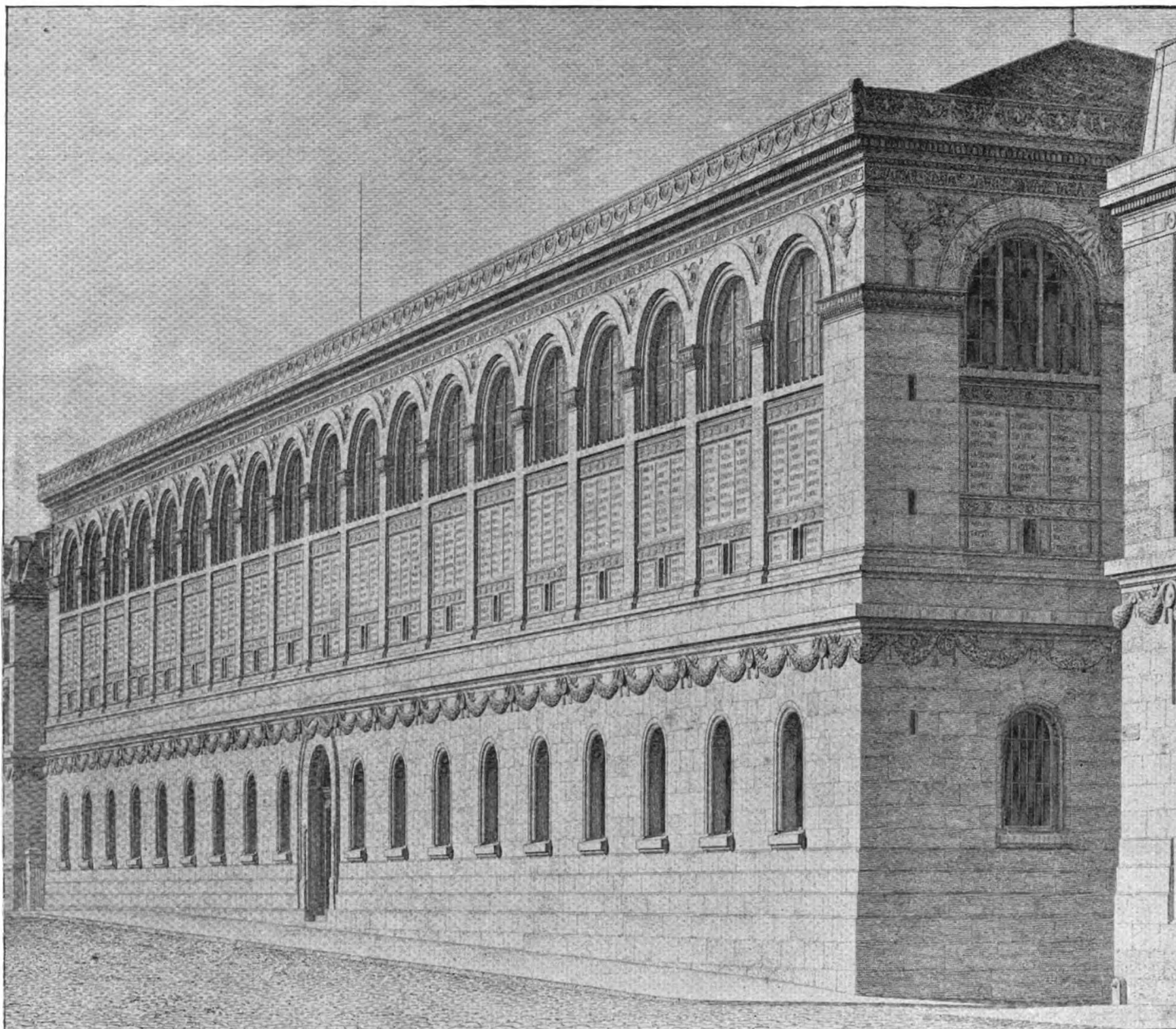
TOWER OF TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON.

whose motive is expressive of the great hall within, but the same motive is carried along the sides also, where it has no meaning, where the rooms inside have such a different arrangement that the arcades are pierced and cut into or blocked up in all sorts of incongruous ways, as if the building, patched and altered and forced to new uses, had been built for one purpose and then altered for another to the great injury of its design; it suggests indeed some patched-up old Roman ruin like the theatre of Marcellus.

But there are in the library some examples of apparently blind and unreasoning following of precedent; one, especially, we refer to because, though a comparatively slight matter, it is much to be regretted and is even somewhat ridiculous. At Rome at the foot of the staircase from the Piazza di Spagna are posts on which, flat against their tops, are eagles carved with "wings displayed, checky," as the heralds would say. They are, in fact, the arms of an ancient noble Roman family, and here on these posts are in place, and though hardly beautiful in themselves, are interesting because they have a meaning. With the most absurd disregard for propriety or reason, these posts, eagles and all, with the diaper pattern on their wings, have been exactly copied in the posts all around the new library, although, as we have said, the eagles can hardly be considered in themselves objects of beauty. It is to be hoped that before long these ludicrous and meaningless birds, which have been irreverently but not altogether inappropriately likened to broiled chickens, may be cut off.

Across the square from the library in the tower of Trinity Church we have another and perhaps more striking example of the right use of precedent. This tower is a development from that of the





LIBRAIRIE STE. GENEVIÈVE, PARIS.

old cathedral at Salamanca, using its motives as a starting point, but improving its proportion, developing its suggestions into the noble tower of which Boston is so justly proud. The two towers differ in that the plan of Trinity tower is square, while that of Salamanca is twelve-sided, and the proportions of Trinity tower have a breadth and freedom which the old tower of Salamanca does not have.

But there is a class of designs which, while following precedent, or using it rather with that confidence which comes of thorough knowledge, are not developed from any one original, but follow the general precedent of their style. The authors of these buildings are fully at home in the style they may have adopted, are thoroughly imbued with its spirit, and so are able to use it both with freedom and knowledge, following precedent where it is helpful, but never fearing to modify it as practical wants or a sensitive feeling for the best expression of the function of the building and its parts may dictate. Such buildings may not be absolutely as beautiful as those whose design is confessedly founded on some one masterpiece of the past, but their art is more progressive, more full of promise for the future.

Take, for instance, some of our best commercial buildings, a class of structure in which we excel. Probably the first of the type to which reference is made was the Cheney Building at Hartford, Conn., by the late H. H. Richardson. It was Romanesque in that it followed in a general way the precedents of mediæval Romanesque architecture. The divisions of its arcades

must have been suggested by the arcading of the naves, especially the interior of the naves of many of the Romanesque cathedrals. But the style was adapted to new conditions. Following ecclesiastical precedents, it was made admirably to serve and to express commercial requirements. There was, however, a want of complete harmony among its various parts, and its ornamentation had a certain half-Gothic character not entirely appropriate, and the undue emphasis of the corner pavilion was without reason and injured the effect of the building. The Ames Building in Boston, on the corner of Bedford and Kingston Streets, which was destroyed in the Thanksgiving Day fire in 1889, was the next step in this progress. It was simpler, its ornamentation more expressive, and it was without the useless and meaningless features which still cling to the Cheney Building. The absolute simplicity of the Marshall Field Building in Chicago, Mr. Richardson's next great store building, was a still further development. Following the same general lines, but with all unnecessary features eliminated, almost without ornamentation, but more perfect in proportion, it may be said to have set the type for the commercial buildings of the United States, excepting the "skyscrapers" which have sprung up since Mr. Richardson's day. The Ames Building, on Lincoln Street, Boston, by Messrs. Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, is a building in brick of excellent design which follows closely the precedent set by Mr. Richardson. Its still more beautiful neighbor, the Auchmuty Building, by Messrs. Winslow & Wetherell (which like it has just been



NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY, BOSTON.

destroyed by a fire, which again emphasizes the folly of enclosing huge areas by brick walls without sufficient fireproof cross walls), follows the same precedents more distantly and less obviously, using Renaissance suggestion in most of the detail. Such a building as this could not have been designed without a most thorough and scholarly knowledge of precedent, coupled with artistic feeling and power. The Equitable Building at Denver, Col., by Messrs. Andrews & Jaques, is another admirable example in which the guiding principle of the design has been the satisfaction and expression of certain practical wants, but which certainly could not have received such successful development without a thorough knowledge of precedent.

The same might be said even of the most successful of the "elevator buildings," such, for instance, as the older portion of the Monadnock and the Auditorium buildings in Chicago, by Messrs. Burnham & Root, and Messrs. Adler & Sullivan, respectively.

It would be easy to multiply examples, but enough have perhaps been brought forward to indicate sufficiently the limits of the right use and the abuse of precedent, and to emphasize the necessity of a thorough scholarly training in the history and growth of the historic styles, which, while leading to a use of precedent with unhampered freedom, will lead also to such a reverent regard for the lessons of the past as shall prevent wanton and meaningless change. The education of the public to an appreciation of this training we believe to be, perhaps, the greatest good that may be hoped from the splendid buildings of the World's Fair at Chicago.

Our conclusions may be briefly summed up as follows: Work that either from ignorance or of purpose attempts to dispense with precedent altogether, or which uses the forms of past art without an intelligent knowledge of their meaning, is necessarily

not only ungrammatical, but incoherent, formless, ugly; it is to architecture what the gibbering of an idiot is to language.

On the other hand, work that is merely imitative of past art, which dares change nothing in the traditional forms, is unprogressive and abortive.

To make the practical requirements of a building yield in the least degree to the supposed requirements of artistic precedent is to make precedent the master instead of the servant, is to deliberately close the door to progress, and to stifle artistic life. To employ any architectural member without reference to its meaning and use, or to introduce any detail merely because it strikes the fancy, and not because it is appropriate, is to follow whim instead of trained artistic feeling, to prefer doggerel to poetry, and to be false to the central principle that underlies all true art. To wantonly change, merely for the sake of change, any form which has been perfected by centuries of development is not only foolishly to throw away the result of previous growth, but to cut one's self off from the continued current of artistic life which has flowed on almost without interruption from the earliest times.

H. LANGFORD WARREN.

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NOTE.—The illustrations to this article are all from photographs taken directly from the buildings, with the exception of that representing the *Librairie Ste. Geneviève*, of which no photograph could be obtained. This is from an engraving made from the drawing of M. Labrousse, the architect of the building.

The photograph of *S. Giorgio in Velabro* was kindly loaned by Messrs. Smith & Packard, publishers of *European Architecture*.